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# Indian Journal of Theology

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Reflections on Evanston

The Vedanta Philosophy and the Message of Christ

To Christ through the Vedanta?

The Religious Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal

The Teaching of Church History in India

Hinduism Re-thinking Itself

Book Reviews

Book Notices

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# Reflections on Evanston

J. R. CHANDRAN

In recent ecumenical conversations the expression, 'Pilgrim People of God', has been used of the Church and it might rightly be said that Evanston marked an important stage in the Pilgrimage. In India, pilgrims go from place to place seeking darshan (vision). The ecumenical pilgrims too at Evanston received a new vision of God's purpose for His people. Though in one sense it might be called a mountain top experience for the Church, it was not the experience of a people escaping from the problems of the world, but of a people sent out into the world to face its problems and tensions. The two words round which the Evanston vision of the People of God might be summed up are 'Hope' and 'Unity'.

The choice of Hope as the theme for the second Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Evanston, had created wide interest in the study of eschatology. The third report of the Advisory Commission was not simply the result of the pooling of the thinking of a few expert theologians. Comments and criticisms made on the previous reports by individuals and groups all over the world had been considered in the preparation of the third report. A report which had been prepared with the help of the intensive study of theologians and Biblical scholars and after wide discussion in the Church could not easily be improved by a general assembly of the World Council. The Assembly could only commend the third report for the careful study of the churches, with certain comments. No advance was made at Evanston in the understanding of the Christian doctrine of eschatology. Very little criticism was directed against the substance of the third report. The discussions at the Assembly, however, helped to show certain important omissions, such as, the present work of the Holy Spirit in the Church and the world. Dissatisfaction was also expressed about the treatment in the report of non-Christian religions and rival hopes. The total reaction of the Assembly to the report may be summed up in the words of the Assembly statement itself: 'It moved us not only to agreement and disagreement, but to testimony.'

## Hope

The opening addresses on Hope by Professor Schlink of Heidelberg and Professor Calhoun of Yale seemed to justify the fears of some that there was going to be a clash between the 'American' and the 'European' attitudes to eschatology. But the process of discovering one another revealed that regional or geographic labels were inadequate for describing the deep theological differences and that underneath much of the verbal differences of expression were common fundamental convictions. The pageant on the Christian Hope enacted at the Festival of Faith in Soldier

Field, even though produced by Americans, could be appreciated by all as expressing the central stream of the Biblical drama of redemption. There was certainly difficulty at the Assembly in accepting any particular doctrinal statement about hope. But there was not the least doubt that Christ is the ground of our hope and that it is for His coming in glory that we all wait with eager hope, 'knowing that God is faithful and that even now He holds all things in His hand.'

## Unity

Speaking of Unity, it cannot be forgotten that it is the realization of our fundamental unity in Christ which has led us to the modern ecumenical movement. At Amsterdam the churches declared that they 'intend to stay together'. But this declaration could not end the problem of disunity in the Church. The Evanston Assembly was an Assembly of the Council of *Churches* remaining in separation. In some ways the last six years of the existence of the World Council had brought the churches into closer knowledge of one another and the delegates at Evanston felt free to criticize one another frankly. But it cannot yet be said that the World Council has cleared any of the real obstacles to unity. The Eastern Orthodox churches found it difficult at Evanston to accept a common statement on the Faith and Order theme, namely, *Our Oneness in Christ and our Disunity as Churches*. The report adopted by the Assembly, however, made a statement bolder than any previous ecumenical document. It said, 'when churches, in their actual historical situations, reach a point of readiness and a time of decision, then their witnessing may require obedience unto death. They may then have to be prepared to offer up some of their accustomed, inherited forms of life in uniting with other churches without complete certainty as to all that will emerge from the step of faith.' The World Council of Churches does not exist as an end in itself. It exists, on the contrary, constantly to remind the churches of the Lord's intention for the Church's unity and to encourage the churches to move forward in obedience to the Lord in adventures of visible unity. The celebration of the Liturgy of the Church of South India was a reminder to many at the Assembly of Christ's call to the churches to witness to Him through visible unity. Many openly said that the C.S.I. Liturgy was the highest point of their Evanston experience. Evanston was not satisfied with the Amsterdam declaration, 'We intend to *stay* together,' but went on to say, 'we dedicate ourselves to God anew that He may enable us to grow together.'

## The Challenge of Hope in the World

The notes of 'hope' and 'unity' in Christ heard at Evanston were not the notes of abstract theology. They were the affirmations in faith of a people living in many different concrete situations on earth. Though a little overweighted with the clergy, the Assembly was composed of representatives of many different occupations. There were college professors, labour leaders, trade unionists, doctors, bankers, farmers, statesmen, lawyers and people of many other professions. One was also repeatedly made aware that even the People of God were living in the world sharing the limitations of the social and cultural environments.

The Evanston Assembly could not altogether stand detached from the influences of ideological or cultural backgrounds and political situations. For some delegates communism represented the greatest threat to democracy and free enterprise was the best expression of democracy. Charles Taft, for example, tried to defend the American culture, saying, 'This culture at its best is really a product of Christian principles.' Others, particularly those from Asian and African countries, were concerned not so much with liberal democracy as with the economic justice which is a prerequisite for democracy. Many statements and incidents reminded us of the concrete and ugly problems of this world. The denial of the freedom of movement in America to Bishop Peter of Hungary, and the open letter to Dr. J. H. Hromadka from the Czechoslovakian refugees in Chicago, calling him a traitor, reflected some of the international tensions. The dramatic presentation by Dr. M. Kozaki of Japan of a petition signed by thousands of Japanese asking for the banning of all nuclear weapons showed another aspect of the world situation. The speeches made by the Rev. P. K. Dagadu of Africa and Dr. Charles Malik of Lebanon on 'Asia and Africa ask Searching Questions' were marked by the new spirit of the Asian and African peoples claiming equal partnership with Western powers. Behind the insistence by many of the European delegates on the importance of the salvation of the Jews for Christian eschatology and the rejection of their proposal by most of the non-Europeans there was perhaps an example of the influence of social, cultural and other environmental factors on theological convictions. The discussion over the substitution of 'equality' by the rather insipid word 'equity' as a goal of social and economic justice was further evidence of the division in the Church caused by the problems of the world. But, in spite of the many differences of national, cultural, ideological and social backgrounds, Evanston was a demonstration of the power of Christ to overcome these differences. The differences were never great enough to break the fellowship with one another in Christ. One of the most memorable statements made at Evanston was that made by Bishop Peter, who said, 'We came from the other side of the world, but not from another side of the Church. At home and here too, we proclaim against all divisions and tensions the unbreakable oneness of the Church.' One cannot say that Evanston said anything radically new on our hope in Christ or the unity of the Church. But there is no doubt that the challenge of these themes for the Church's task today was expressed much more forcibly than at previous ecumenical gatherings. The Church's hope is hope in Christ. The rather abstract expression 'Christian hope' was abandoned in favour of 'hope in Christ'. The Church's hope is not the perfection of this world within history but the consummation of God's Kingdom and appearance of Christ in glory. At the same time the Church's hope affirmed at Evanston is not merely the hope in a hereafter. It is a hope which is challengingly relevant for the concrete situations in this world. More time was spent at Evanston in grappling with the tangled social, economic and political problems of this world than with the understanding of the doctrine of hope. Even though it was not easy for theologians to agree about the nature of the relation between our ultimate hope in Christ and our provisional hopes in the social and political spheres, the Evanston deliberations were marked by the common conviction that the Church's

hope in Christ gives her a mission to fulfil in this world. The Church's mission is not a fresh discovery of the second Assembly of the World Council. The mission is the proclaiming of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and witnessing to His power in every sphere of life in the world. The contribution of Evanston is in stating the nature of the mission in concrete terms, in terms challenging individual believers as well as churches to a fresh obedience of the Lord.

### The Mission to Unity in the World

It is true that no progress was made at Evanston in the movement towards the visible unity of the Church. It may even be said that the strengthening of confessional loyalties and particularly the attitude taken by the Orthodox churches gave the impression of a retrograde movement from the point of view of Church unity. But no previous ecumenical gathering so forcibly impressed upon the participants the intimate relation between the Church's mission and unity, and therefore the urgency and the dynamic character of Unity. Underlying the discussions on Responsible Society, Racial Tensions, International Relations, the Laity and other practical problems, was the conviction that in every area of human relations the Church's mission is a ministry of reconciliation. It is a mission to unity in Christ where sin in various forms had created dis-harmony and disunity.

The mission to unity or the ministry of reconciliation may be regarded as the key to the understanding of the sectional reports. The report on Responsible Society says, 'It will be the task of the churches to point to the dangers inherent in the present situation: on the one hand the temptation to succumb to anti-communist hysteria and the danger of a self-righteous assurance concerning the political and social systems of the West; on the other hand the temptation to accept the false promises of communism and to overlook its threat to any responsible society. Christians in communist and non-communist countries are called to hold each other in special brotherly concern and prayer across all barriers. Those of us in non-communist lands affirm our unity with these churches in the ecumenical fellowship and the bond of the Spirit, and our confidence in their loyalty to Christ.' In the sphere of international affairs also the Church's rôle is to help the nations 'to live together in a divided world.' The report says, 'Above all, Christians must witness to a dynamic hope in God, in whose hands lie the destinies of the nations, and in this confidence be untiring in their efforts to create and maintain an international climate favourable for reconciliation and goodwill.' After speaking of certain minimum conditions to be met by both sides of the divided world the report goes on to speak of the necessity of moving beyond the minimum requirements into an order of genuine co-operation. 'This order will be facilitated and reinforced through the free exchange of persons, culture, information and goods; through common undertakings for relief and human welfare.' 'Christians must go still further. They must promote the reconciliation of the nations; they must work for the establishment of justice based on a rule of law, so that a responsible society, grounded in truth, may be possible.' In the report on International Relations we read, 'Racial and ethnic fears, hates and prejudices are more than social problems with whose existence we must reckon;

they are sins against God and His commandments that the Gospel alone can cure. To the Church has been committed the preaching of the Gospel; to proclaim the healing of the nations through Christ is verily her task... It is however only when the churches come to Christ in penitence and obedience, and receive from Him His cleansing, that they receive from Him authority to proclaim His will with the voice of prophecy... The Church has a duty to create and to keep open every possible line of communication between people, between political opponents, between people of differing views, cultures, races, languages, between the conservative and the venturesome.'

### The Mission to Unity through Church Union

This mission to unity cannot be fulfilled by a divided Church. The report on the Faith and Order theme says that the divided state of the Church is sinful because 'it obscures from men the sufficiency of Christ's atonement, inasmuch as the Gospel of reconciliation is denied in the very lives of those who proclaim it.' The urgency of manifesting to the world the power of Christ to break down the walls of partition is very forcibly expressed. It is, at the same time, recognized that the churches will realize their unity only as they together seek to fulfil their mission in the world. 'Whenever we are prepared to undertake together the study of the Word of God and are resolved to be obedient to what we are told, we are on the way toward realizing the oneness of the Church in Christ in the actual state of our dividedness on earth.'

Thus as Professor W. Freytag has said, 'looking back on Evanston, there is much cause for reflection, for prayer, and for action.' We may say that in India we are in some ways ahead of the ecumenical movement in that we have achieved Church union, though only in a small measure. But in the light of our hope in Christ, the mission to unity committed to the Church is more dynamic than mere ecclesiastical unity. There are wide gulfs separating economic and social classes, caste groups and many kinds of group tensions affecting the harmony of human relations in this country. The ministry of reconciliation in this context is not easy. It will certainly imply pioneering in the sphere of social and economic justice as well as in the sphere of personal reconciliation. Within the Church too Church union will not solve all problems. There are areas in the life of the Church where the world seems to have conquered the Church. The Church too is guilty of caste and class distinctions. The Evanston reports do have a challenging message for the churches in India.

In international affairs today India is playing a very constructive rôle, acting as an instrument of reconciliation or mediation. The Church in India also may be an effective instrument at this time if, following the decision of Evanston regarding the establishment of contact with churches in 'iron curtain countries', she sought to establish close relationships with the Church in China and Russia. One way of achieving this may be by organizing a friendship mission consisting of Indian Christians to visit the churches in China and Russia and other 'Eastern' countries. Christ has promised that the gates of Hades cannot prevail against the Church. In obedience to our Lord we have to receive strength from Him to manifest the unity of the Church which cannot be broken by the sinful divisions of the world.

# The Vedanta Philosophy and the Message of Christ

CARL KELLER

(*By kind permission of the Editors of The International Review of Missions, we are printing below excerpts from an article which appeared in a recent issue of that journal. We believe that this article has not received the attention in India that it deserves. Alongside it we also publish a contribution on the same subject from an Indian Christian student of the Vedanta, and we hope that the publication of these two articles in The Indian Journal of Theology will stimulate our readers to further thinking and discussion on this important subject.—Eps.*)

## I

The Vedanta—that is, consistent monism—is the outstanding philosophy of India. The Vedanta, among all the philosophic systems and religions produced by the astonishingly fruitful Indian spirit, is the set of principles which nowadays still counts the largest number of adherents and in which Indian longings and views are most clearly reflected. It is the crown of Hinduism and at the same time its foundation. It is of the Vedanta that Indians think when they speak of Indian cosmology; to it they refer as India's contribution to the world. It is typical and characteristic for India in a measure that no European philosophy can be for Europe. Anyone who understands the Vedanta understands the Indian people.

Add to that another fact: this philosophy attracts not only India in an irresistible way, but the western countries as well. Many intellectuals in Europe and America find in it the answer to their life-problems and to the difficulties of the modern world. In western countries, too, the Vedanta is becoming a spiritual power to be taken seriously into account.

What is its attraction? Two characteristics must be mentioned:

In the first place, it is admirably flexible and adaptable. In distinguishing the *Aparā-Vidyā*, the 'lower knowledge'—i.e. the analysis of the world of phenomena, of the visible and the invisible cosmos—from the *Parā-Vidyā*—the knowledge of the reality, of eternal, unchangeable, unqualifiable existence, fundamental for all appearances, called the 'higher knowledge'—the Vedanta opens the way for a bifurcation of philosophic research which always makes it possible for the Vedantist to conform to the times, to be quite modern.

And there is a second valid reason for its attraction: the sublime, overpowering simplicity of that unchangeable 'higher knowledge'. It

is so simple, so absolutely above all systems and all problems, so self-evident, that one cannot but admire it. The principal thesis of the Vedanta teaches the absolute, unchangeable and simply indivisible uniformity of existence. '*Ekam eva adviditityam*': one thing, without a second one—that is reality, Brahma, the ultimate principle of substance. This one thing, this solely existing one, must be perceived.

The question arises how the ultimate substance can be perceived; for it cannot be attained by the ordinary means of reasoning, nor can it be defined. All research, however thorough, remains imprisoned in and by the multiplicity of appearances. To put it in an Indian way: neither awake, nor in a dream, nor in dreamless sleep can men perceive the absolute, true being. There must consequently exist a fourth state, '*Turiya*', different from all the three known states of consciousness, a method of perception which aims at Brahma itself, at the ultimate substance that is to be separated from the whole world of appearances. But since this Brahma is really a 'unity' without a second thing, this way of perception must include the abolition of the twofold state of the perceiver and his object, i.e. in the suppression of duality. In other words: anyone who recognizes Brahma, the absolute one, in this way, which differs entirely from all empirical perception, is himself Brahma, himself the one, eternal, unchangeable reality. *Brahma veda brahma bhavati*: to know Brahma and to be Brahma is one and the same. '*Turiya*', the fourth state of consciousness, besides the state of waking, dream and dreamless sleep, is also called *Samādhi* or 'perfection', or else *Moksha*—redemption from the multiplicity of the world of appearances.

There is a last link in this chain of perceptions: if Brahma, the one, true being, differs from all appearances, and if the person who recognizes Brahma is himself Brahma, himself the one, true being, then the true, ultimate substance of man is in general nothing but Brahma, the absolutely one, true being. Consequently empirical man, with all that we call 'personality', 'soul', 'the spirit' of man, belongs to multiplicity as a concatenation of appearances which is just not the true, one being. And therefore any possibility of taking seriously, on the metaphysical plane, empirical man and the appearances which he perceives is ruled out: in a metaphysical sense there are no appearances nor is there a man perceiving them. In a metaphysical sense there exists only the one, indivisible Brahma, and the task of man who appears with and among these is to realize that he is Brahma and that in fact there is no such thing as man, just as the appearances in general have no reality either.

When he knows Brahma, when he has become Brahma, he will recognize everything as unreal: while thinking, he does not think; while working, he does not work; enjoying, he does not enjoy; living, he does not live and dying, he does not die. Being himself the eternal, unchangeable, true, ultimate principle, he exists beyond all human activity.

## II

No further proof is needed that we are not dealing here with an ordinary philosophic system; the principle of the absolute oneness of the true substance of things is not to be grasped by intellectual deduction. We are dealing here, rather, with a knowledge that is fixed *a priori*, attested by the actual experience of those who have realized Brahma as authoritatively laid down in the Veda (the Upanishads). The

one true Brahma is therefore not a construction or projection of human reasoning; the point in question is rather a certainty, arising from a 'revelation': what is not available to reason and what in general is not perceptible is simply taken absolutely for granted. One could even go further and say: the consistent monism of the Vedanta is nothing but the all-embracing philosophic and theological evaluation of the religious fundamental phenomenon: of the experience of the 'quite different one', i.e. the experience of God. This experience of the perpetual, of the unchangeable, of the eternal origin of all things, the 'wholly other substance', is recognized as the only truth and—contrary to all appearances—made the source of all explanation of life and cosmos. And it is precisely as an interpretation of that experience of the 'wholly other' substance that the Vedanta should be utilized for theological research.

It is at this point useful to pause and glance at the development of Christian theology in India up to this time. What discussion have the Mission and the Church so far had with the Vedanta? The answer is indisputable—and disheartening.

The chorus of opinions on this question resounds pure, clear and overwhelming: this philosophy must be rejected without compromise because of its blending of God and man, its unjustifiable depreciation of creation, its ethical indifference.

In three ways Christian theology has confronted Hinduism:

1. The traditional criticism of Indian religion and philosophy is the purely negative one of aggression, contrasting the two religions. In the nineteenth century this was done simply by opposing the Christian system of thinking as the final revelation of the living God, sometimes in very bellicose fashion, to an insufficiently understood Hinduism, which was presented as a lie and a delusion of Satan, in the (of course unfulfilled) hope that the poor, erring Hindus would become aware of the imprisoning character of their thinking and would unreservedly accept the revealed system of truth.

A closer study of the Indian original writings has enabled us to see that this is not so easily done; and, since the First World War, we began to postulate the peculiarity of the Christian revelation in contrast to Hinduism, which seems, in the Christian view, to be closely self-contained. For Hinduism had noticed very quickly that in its philosophic-religious structure there was ample room for Christ, and so it had begun to assimilate Christianity.

The theological sterility of this contrasting method is obvious. Theological research consists in constantly renewed endeavour to grasp the facts about Christ to an ever deeper extent. It is a constant circling round Christ which is never completed, whereby new approaches, new points of view, new discoveries—and new experiences—throw an ever new light upon the one subject—Christ. Yet the negative-aggressive attitude to foreign religions loses sight of the purpose of genuine theological research. It even turns its back on the Centre of this work and, swinging sharply round, sees itself confronted by a fictitious attack. And that means that we are no longer circling round Christ: to meet that fictitious front, we have ourselves to form a battle line, to rely upon a system of perceptions as complete and unchangeable as possible, in order to hold our ground.

In India we must, rather, again start that circling round Christ and let new light, even from the angle of the Vedanta, fall upon Him. We cannot simply 'have' Christ in a conclusively formed doctrinal system; we can only contemplate Him—and endeavour to contemplate Him in a new way in trying to do so from an Indian point of view.

2. The second method of dealing with Hinduism differs only apparently from the first: it is the idea, classically advocated by Farquhar in his most captivating book, *The Crown of Hinduism*, that the message of Christ is the fulfilment of all genuine and true aspirations within Hinduism.

The Christian Faith can take the place of Hinduism—not as something hostile, fundamentally different, but as the fulfilment of an aspiration which Hinduism cannot realize by itself. This standpoint does not differ essentially from the traditional view described above, because the Christian truth is here also looked upon as a system of ideas that ought to take the place of the broken-down Indian system. Moreover, it is reasoned, with uncharitable and deluded contention, that the Indian system—the Indian genius—is incapable of meeting the demands of the modern world—a masterful assertion which does not betray much insight into the power of renewal innate in Indian thought. It is also typical of this school that it does not know how to handle Vedanta; but we are not astonished, when we think of its adaptability and overwhelming simplicity, that it is the Vedanta which confers unexpected strength upon Hinduism. It is not, therefore, Christianity as mentioned above, but the Vedanta, which is the crown of Hinduism.

3. There remains a third way of appeal to the heart of India: the constructive-theological method. It is represented in particular by a group of Indian lay-theologians around Mr. P. Chenchiah in Madras. We may certainly claim that here, in principle, the way has been found and entered on which has a future. For Mr. Chenchiah has understood that what is decisive in the Gospel of Christ is not an occidental-Christian-theological construction of ideas, but Christ Himself as a fact. The theological task in India, therefore, consists in giving a quite new interpretation to this all-decisive fact. And in this connexion the western interpretation of Christ will have to be considered too. But even more important as a clue to the understanding of Christ will be the Indian experience of Christ: Christ reveals himself also to the Indian who is devoted to Him, and to him, as he tries to grasp the whole importance of Christ with all the means at his disposal, it will be given to recognize and to interpret Christ in an entirely new way.

Mr. Chenchiah's programme must be appreciated in principle. In placing ourselves on the level of Indian thinking—and that means accepting the principal theses of the Vedanta as the hypothesis for research work—we must try to interpret Christ anew. In constantly circling round Christ—which we have defined as the theological task—we must take up the standpoint of absolute monism, so as to discover a new side in Him.

This does not imply that we recognize the Vedanta itself as such and that we blend it with the message of Christ. Our objective and aim is Christ alone, and that means Christ as He is proclaimed in the Bible. But just as no western theologian can or should deny his connexion with western philosophies, so must an Indian theologian be equally loyal to

his. We must, indeed, for once, adopt the Vedantist theories and try with their help to penetrate the secret of the Bible, i.e. of Christ.

It may be that the Vedanta provides a better method for the study of the message of Christ than our methods of thinking derived from Greece and the Renaissance. It may be that the Indian way of thinking is much nearer to the Bible's thinking than ours and therefore much better qualified to probe the ultimate depths of the Bible. Should that be so, then it might become evident that a theological method of research enriched and whetted by the Vedanta might help not only the Indian church but also Christianity everywhere.

### III

We have now to show concisely how the Vedanta might, indeed, become vitally significant for theological thinking.

In what is written above we have understood the Vedanta as a remorselessly consistent exposition and interpretation of the overwhelming religious experience at its deepest level; of the practical experience of a 'wholly other' substance: the one reality, God (Brahma), differing fundamentally from all appearances. Already this starting point might be of interest for our understanding of the Gospel of Christ; it helps us to ponder, in a systematical and exegetical way, God's absolute transcendence. We learn to understand God as the opposite of all appearances, as the one who can be thought of neither inside nor outside the appearances. Should God substantially be inside or outside the appearances, it would be difficult to see how, as the Creator of things, He could at the same time be different from them. It follows, then, that God must be understood as absolutely different from all appearances. Consequently the possibility remains that God might appear in and under the form of the appearances (and indeed, the fact of this appearing is the beginning of all theology); but substantially there is no possibility of comparing God with the appearances, nor can He be metaphysically connected with them. He is the 'wholly other' one.

If this is so, then—as in the Vedanta—the question arises concerning the perceptibility of God, i.e. concerning the possibility of knowing and describing God's nature. The Vedanta will remind us that a God separated from the appearances is not to be recognized after the fashion of the appearances. Therefore the perception of God must be an event *sui generis*. We must, therefore, re-examine the numerous Biblical texts which speak of the impossibility of seeing God, that is to say, of describing Him in the forms of appearances. We must free ourselves of the delusion that a perfectly described God must be the real God. We may, indeed, describe God in His appearance—and it will be one of the theological tasks to do so. But the nature of God cannot be recognized by contemplating His appearance. One can describe God correctly in every way and to our theological satisfaction and still not know Him.

But now the event *sui generis*, in which the recognition of God takes place, will appear in a new light as Biblical 'faith'. If God differs from all appearances, no other proof is needed to state that He may only be known through Himself. In other words: the person who really perceives God is, as the perceiver, one with the God who perceives Himself. Three Biblical phenomena are useful to explain this fact:

Firstly, the very prominent mysticism, witnessed to in the Bible, which must now be taken seriously. The centre of faith, its strength and reality, is mystical. The 'resting in God', the 'we in God' and 'God in us' and many allusions of this kind need further investigation in connexion with the transcendence of the nature of God.

But secondly, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit thus comes once more into its rightful place. The neglect, so often deplored, of the fact of the Holy Spirit in Protestant theology is closely connected with the Protestant dislike of mysticism. 'Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?', 'He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit', and other similar statements can only be fully understood when the absolute transcendence of God is fully accepted.

The third phenomenon that must be treated afresh is the often observed absence of a plainly expressed doctrine of God in the Bible. The Bible often speaks of God, but it never describes Him. The man who knows God cannot describe Him; and he needs no description of Him because it will seem to him wholly inadequate. Or, to put it in the classic words of the Upanishads: 'He who knows Him, does not know Him, and he who does not know Him, knows Him'.

That Vedantist thinking may help us to understand God's transcendence well, and with Biblical correctness, may already have become evident by the suggestions given above and will not be seriously contradicted. But the investigation of God's relation to the appearances and of the appearances themselves may be more difficult.

Because of the absolute transcendence of Brahma, the Vedanta finally rejects the ultimate reality of appearances (yet without—it cannot be over-emphasized—depriving the appearances of a provisional pseudo-reality). Before we enumerate the elements of the Biblical message which point in this direction, we must briefly show that this solution of the problem of creation seems to be satisfactory also to Christian theology.

There is no solution of the problem of creation, i.e. of the appearances, if their full reality and God's absolute transcendence of existence are taken for granted. These are questions which again and again also perplex the Indian philosopher. Somewhat simplified, the problem may be formulated as follows: if both the universe and God, who transcends it absolutely, are real—and real in the same way—then the juxtaposition of the two realities is really not conceivable. The temptation lies all too near us to substitute for God's transcendence of substance a transcendence of existence whereby God is thought of as beyond all that is created and as such to be experienced. But that, as Professor Emil Brunner points out, would lead to an extreme deism, a complete elimination of God from the creation, which is neither theologically nor philosophically conceivable. Thus an appearance of God in creation and a recognizing of God within creation become impossible. The other temptation (to which, for instance, Ramanuja succumbed within the Vedanta with his *Vishishtādvaita*) is quite as close at hand, i.e. to teach the conjunction and association of the appearances with God, who transcends them. The appearance would then be real, looked at as the modification of God, who transcends the appearance. But that would be pantheism or theopantism—a solution which, indeed, does not take God's absolute transcendence of substance seriously enough.

If one does not state, simply by affirmation, the full reality both of the appearance and of the absolutely transcendental God and leave aside their relation to each other (which does not satisfy any serious thinker), the only solution remaining is to ascribe to the appearance a reality at least different from God's reality and therefore no full reality. So the appearance is only seemingly real, a provisional reality, which veils the nature of God, who absolutely transcends the appearance. We are then invited to accept the appearance as 'creation', i.e. the sport of God which is simply to be accepted, but before all to become aware of God while being part of it.

Now it is my conviction that this is also the answer of the Bible to the problem of the creation.

Out of the many obvious hints and observations, we select four or five:

Firstly, we are reminded of the significance of God's 'Spirit' in the world of appearances. According to Psalm 104, created beings are only real in that they have God's breath of life. If that breath is taken away, then they again become 'dust'—nothingness. Koheleth, with his consistent exposition of the nothingness of creation, is on entirely Biblical ground, for this same thought of the worthlessness of the creation, if it is apart from the presence of the reality of God, has repeatedly found expression in the Christian teaching of the dependence of the appearances on God. But anything which is in such a way dependent on God can have no final reality.

Secondly, we think of many passages which—in just the same way as the *Lilā* or the *Māyā* conceptions—look at creation as God's plaything, His sport. Psalm 104 goes far in that direction by saying that God has created the huge sea monsters for His play. But God's rest in and with the completed 'good' creation on the seventh day and His walking in the garden of Eden in the cool of the day are also implied here. Finally, we think of the numerous passages which speak of God's glorification through the creation. But the God to whom the appearance is thus brought into relation is now recognized as the absolutely transcendent one, who does not come into contact with the appearance. Creation only has reality in so far as God Himself is the appearing-one. But that can only be so in a metaphorical, provisional way.

Thirdly, we must refer here to the conviction of the omnipresence of God, as it finds its expression particularly in Psalm 139: everywhere God is found, everywhere He is powerful. Now, if the phenomenal universe is essentially filled with the real presence of the absolutely transcendent God, then the appearance which veils this presence cannot be said to be real.

Fourthly, the pseudo-reality of the appearance corresponds also to the Biblical exposition of history: it is not the appearance and its changes that are important, but the divine reality revealed in the appearance (naturally, again, only in so far as God Himself appears). In short, the Bible's wholly and entirely mythological exposition and view of 'history' is dazzlingly apparent. The changes of the appearances and thus the appearance itself (i.e. among other things, human history) are represented in the Bible as very nearly insignificant; the life element of the Bible is a thoroughly 'mythological' view of things which entirely depreciates the appearance.

Fifthly, a prominent place must also be given to Biblical eschatology as it is summarized in the passage which is often slurred over or overlooked, but still 'mystically formulated', that God 'at the End' will be all in all—i.e. with no more appearance as we know it but with everything put at His feet, without individuality, without independent will or action—that is the end, the aim. Though the appearance may at present possess a certain reality, towards the end it will recede more and more and God will be recognized as the only final reality.

Finally, we must say a word about the Biblical doctrine of sin, which has its origin in the erroneous separation of the appearance from God, in the blasphemous depreciation of God which ascribes divine nature to the creature, a final reality to the appearance.

The Biblical exposition of appearance points distinctly to a devaluation of its reality in favour of the solely 'real' reality of God.

There remains, finally, the central question of Christian theology: God's appearance in the midst of appearances—the fact of 'Jesus Christ'.

First of all, it must be indicated that, to our way of thinking, the conception of Christ as the 'Son', i.e. the 'Word' or the 'image of the invisible God', acquires a new significance. Christ is God turned towards the appearance, appearing in appearances. In Christ the absolutely transcendent God severs Himself from Himself to produce the appearance and to become appearance. Consequently all the elements of Biblical christology become decisively important.

In the first place, the message of Christ's *mediatorship in creation*, as summarized in the *Epistle to the Colossians*: 'All things were created by Him and for Him, and He is *before* all things, and by Him all things consist.' The whole universe of appearances concentrates itself in Him; He is the epitome of appearances, as He is the epitome of the appearing God.

Further, there is the message of the *Incarnation*: that is the miracle of miracles, in so far as the absolutely transcendent God has become, through Jesus Christ, part of the appearance. For this cause the appearance has reality only in relation to the appearing God. It might also be said: 'Through the Incarnation that relation has been fulfilled'.

Yet we must still consider that, in spite of it all, the divine assumption of human nature cannot obtain absolute reality. The New Testament stresses it again and again, for it is not Jesus in the flesh who is the object of our faith and adoration but the *exalted Christ*. The Incarnation has come to an end with the death of the flesh; and the Resurrection—and, as its consummation, the Ascension and messianic domination of Christ (the 'sitting at the right hand of God')—points to the fact that the appearance must and will be overcome. Therefore the Incarnation has never been understood by the Church to be a sanction of the flesh, i.e. it has never mistaken the appearance for the final reality, but sees it, on the contrary, as 'justification', i.e. the salvation of the sinner who is entangled in the appearance.

And therefore, as we do not take the Incarnation to be a final reality, the strange element of Biblical eschatology becomes comprehensible: Christ 'at the End', together with all appearances, will stand completely back: 'And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him, that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.' It is Christ who reduces the appearance

which is only provisionally endowed with reality to communion and unity with God, who is above all appearance and entirely contrary to it. It is He in whom and by whom the appearance will be reconciled with its eternal foundation, the transcendent God.

Thus I believe that I have shown that the fundamental principles of the Vedanta can, indeed, be rendered fruitful for a new interpretation of christology. It only remains strongly to underline the fact that we have not engaged in Vedantic philosophy, but in Christian theology. Not only have we striven for nothing but the interpretation of the Bible but also, at the decisive point, for the understanding of the appearance of Christ. The enigma of appearance finds its solution in Him and, at the same time, the perception of God has become reality. He alone is the light, the truth, the life, the good shepherd, who delivers us from the unreality of appearances and unites us with the eternal, unchangeable God. There is salvation in none but Him and no other name is given to man by which to obtain that bliss.

Must we not encourage our Indian brethren to interpret Christ as Vedantists?

(Translated from the German.)

### Theological Commission on Worship

*'Disunity is as manifest in the differing ways of worship as it is in disagreements concerning doctrines and institutions. Indeed it is at this point that disunity becomes explicit and the sense of separation most acute.'* (Report of the Third World Conference on Faith and Order, Lund, 1952.)

Many of our readers will be aware that the East Asian section of the Theological Commission on Worship, sponsored by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, is to meet for a Conference at Bangalore on March 18th and 19th, 1955. Under the chairmanship of Principal J. R. Chandran, of the United Theological College, the Conference will listen to papers on the Indigenization of Worship and Church Unity in India, read by representatives of different church traditions. Dr. J. R. Nelson, Secretary of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, is expected to attend the Conference, and it is hoped that the discussion on the important problems involved will draw the different churches closer together in mutual understanding of one another.

# To Christ through the Vedanta ?

ASHANANDA NAG

## What is Vedanta ?

The name of Sankara is great in India and the Vedanta is making its influence felt in certain circles in Western countries. It is difficult to say what exactly fascinates some Western intellectuals in connection with the Vedanta. They probably get tired of the precise empiricism and concreteness of European thought, and are none too reluctant to let in the Eastern breeze that wafts sublime vagueness and vague sublimeness. This is not to say that Sankara, the greatest exponent of the Vedanta, is not one of the inspired thinkers of the world. In epistemology Sankara is as acute as Kant, and in spiritual insight he ranks amongst the great seers of Asia. What Sankara offers may be termed 'consistent monism', only in the sense that Sankara tries to do justice to the One; it may not be his fault altogether that in the process he has to ignore the claims of the Many. We are not aware that the Vedanta lends itself to a cut-and-dried interpretation; the interpretations of the original texts are as varied as the intellectual and spiritual apparatus that are brought to bear upon the disputed passages. When we say 'Vedanta', we really mean the Vedanta as Sankara interprets it, just as when we say 'London', we mean the capital of the United Kingdom, and not the town called London in Ontario, Canada. In his *Vedānta Sāra* (Quintessence of the Vedanta) Sadānanda (15th century A.D.) raises the question: 'What is the Vedanta?', and replies that the word 'Vedanta' means the Upanishads and the Śārīraka-sūtras. The author of *Sarva-Darśana-Saṅgraha* (A Compendium of all Philosophical Systems; 14th century A.D.), who is otherwise admirably impartial, allows himself to take sides and opines that Sankara's philosophy is the crown of philosophical speculation. Sadānanda follows in Sankara's footsteps. Denounced by those who did not see eye to eye with him as 'a Buddhist in disguise', Sankara nevertheless evoked the reverent admiration of many Hindu thinkers, and the force of his appeal has by no means spent itself to this day.

## The Influence of the Vedanta on Hindu Thought

It is not certain that the Vedanta has influenced the Hindu mind, or for that matter, the Indian mind, more than other schools of thought. The influence of Sāṅkhya has been immense, and the impress it has left on the Indian mind is indelible. The major portion of Hindu literature bears testimony more to the influence of Sāṅkhya than to that of the Vedanta. We have to take the Vedanta as we find it; and to divest it of

its associations with the Upanishads and the Sūtras would be to do violence to it. Monism of a sort may emerge out of the process, but that will not be quite the Vedanta. The expurgated Vedanta that is offered to their Western followers by Hindu missionaries is neither the Vedanta nor is it for the West. A few intellectuals have for reasons best known to themselves regarded themselves as representatives of the West; they are satisfied that the Vedanta is scientific and reasonable, but we should not run away with the impression that the West as a whole thinks likewise.

### Indian Christology and the Vedanta

It is desirable that we should keep our Christology and the Vedanta far apart. Vedantic thought and Christian theology hardly meet; they are as wide asunder as pole from pole. Docetism would be the logical result of a fusion of Vedantism and Christian theology. Sankara's Brahman is a mere abstraction. To the non-Vedantist Brahman is the Great Unconscious and the Great Void; so reminiscent in fact is Sankara's Brahman of the Great Void that many Hindu thinkers of mediaeval India took Sankara for a Buddhist masquerading as an exponent of Brahman. A competent modern scholar, Professor S. N. Dasgupta, thought that Sankara's Vedanta was the Śūnya-Vāda (the Great Void) of Buddhism with Brahman superimposed upon it. How can we relate Brahman to the God of Christian theology? The God of Christian theology is a God of love. In Brahman passion cannot be, and the shadow of love never came near it. To all intents and purposes Brahman is a minus quantity; minus 7 is latent as an equational possibility in 100, for 107 minus 7 is 100. The Absolute may emerge as a logical fiction and function as a logical fiction, even as a minus quantity may arise as an equational possibility in connection with a plus quantity, but the plus quantity essentially remains a plus quantity. Only thus can Brahman be sublated in the Christian idea of God; Meister Eckhart's vision of God illustrates the point at issue.

### Christ and Hiranya-garbhā

If we try to fit Christ into the Vedantic scheme, we have to equate Him with Hiranya-garbhā. The Rigveda invests Hiranya-garbhā with majesty and grandeur; Hiranya-garbhā is the first-born of creation; he it is who holds the heaven and the earth; creation is his work; he is the son of Prajā-pati (the Lord of beings). Shorn of his pristine glory, Hiranya-garbhā re-appears in Sankara's philosophy—a pale and dim copy of the brilliant original. The terrible disease, Māyā, afflicts Hiranya-garbhā; and creation, his handiwork, is only a cosmic phantom. It cannot be said of Brahman, enveloped in Māyā, that He 'saw everything that he had made; and behold, it was very good'; and it is quite impossible for a Christian to equate Christ with Hiranya-garbhā.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Paul Deussen thinks that the Upanishads and the Vedanta identify Hiranya-garbhā with the 'knowing subject' of the universe. Space and time are derived from Hiranya-garbhā; since space-time is the matrix of creation, Hiranya-garbhā is associated with creation. The Śvetāśvatara Upanishad says that the great magician Rudra created Hiranya-garbhā. Sankara identifies Hiranya-garbhā with 'exceeding luminous Intelligence'; and Rudra is equated with the Supreme Soul enveloped in Māyā, or exercising its Māyā. In the Matsya Purāṇa Hiranya-garbhā is hailed as the refuge of gods and men, and is considered to be present in every living being.

## Raja Rammohan Roy and Sankara's Vedanta

Raja Rammohan Roy, who knew his Sankara well, wrote: 'Nor will youths be fitted to be better members of society by the Vedantic doctrines which teach them to believe that all visible things have no real existence, that as father, brother, etc., have no actual entity, they consequently deserve no real affection' (*Letter to Lord Amherst, 1823*). It is rather strange that the greatest historian of the Brahmo movement, Pandit Shivanath Sastri, should have opined that Rammohan Roy was 'a Vedantist in metaphysics and a Christian in ethics'. It is indeed true that Rammohan Roy believed that the precepts of Jesus were 'admirably calculated to elevate men's ideas to high and liberal notions of God . . . and well fitted to regulate the conduct of the human race'. But Rammohan's reverent appreciation of Christian ethics was based on his recognition of the fact that in Christianity, as in no other religions he was acquainted with, ethics derive from the very nature of 'the Author and Preserver of this harmonious system' (*Appeal to the Christian Public*). Rammohan Roy was dimly aware of the fact that only in Christianity are metaphysics and ethics not at loggerheads. Righteousness, holiness and love are eternal verities associated with the very nature of God and flow therefrom. In the Vedanta ethics is 'interims ethik'; and Vedanta metaphysics does not sanction or guarantee its validity. Here then is another hurdle Christianity will be up against in the field of Vedantic speculation. The same conflict between ethics and metaphysics is evident in the Gita; and it was a Hindu scholar, Professor S. N. Dasgupta, who made a pointed reference to this conflict in his monumental work, *The History of Indian Philosophy*.

Rammohan Roy allowed himself to believe that the Vedanta was essentially theistic. Many Indian and European students of the Śārīraka-sūtras have arrived at the same conclusion. It will be clear that Rammohan Roy did not accept Sankara as his guide, philosopher and friend.

### The Absolute and Emotional Fervour

The Absolute may remain a logical fiction, but the strange fact is that the idea of the Absolute calls forth all the emotional fervour we have learned to associate with theism. Sankara's beautiful and majestic prose and his still more beautiful poetry convince us that religious instincts are inherent in human nature and brook no suppression. They will surge up and begin to play even round the idea of the Absolute. Rāmānuja and Madhva thought that Sankara was striking at the root of Bhakti by propounding his illusion-theory. Many of us might think that inaction would be the logical conclusion of the illusion-theory, but Sankara springs a surprise. His *Ode to Ātman* is one of the most beautiful pieces in the world's literature; and his *Viveka-chūḍāmaṇi* is a religious classic of a very high order. Sankara himself was a man of action and established Vedanta-centres throughout the length and breadth of India. All these facts indicate that Sankara was better than his views; in his life Sankara transcended and corrected the limitations of his illusion-metaphysics; he asserted in his life what he denied in his theory.

## Christology must remain in the Framework of N.T. Theology

Christology must keep within the framework of New Testament theology both in India and in Western countries. Behind the theology of the New Testament is the spiritual experience of the writers of the book. Christian spirituality has its own modes and may not fit in with the Vedantic scheme, which is inextricably bound up with the doctrine of transmigration and with the acceptance of the *vita contemplativa* as the crown of human life. The Sūtras equate Moksha with the cessation of the cycle of existence; this conception of Moksha is an indication of the fear the Hindu mind has of life and of existence.<sup>2</sup> For the Christian redemption is, however, expressed in terms of life eternal. For the Vedantist the approach to the static and changeless entity called Brahman is through contemplation. The apprehension of the God of Christianity is through prayer and service—service of God and of fellowmen; contemplation is not sufficient to enable us to approach God Who is tremendously active in history. The Vedantist will relegate God to the realm of Māyā, the Christian will label Brahman a logical fiction.

Neither to India nor to Christianity would the Vedantization of Christianity be a boon. The Vedantization of Christianity would spell the resurgence of Gnosticism and all the spiritual and moral complications that might follow.<sup>3</sup> It is no accident of history that science and philosophy should have reached an unprecedented height in countries where Vedantic thought had little or no influence. Social service and philanthropic activities have flourished more in those parts of the world where Sankara's writ does not run. A logical fiction like the Absolute may satisfy Meister Eckhart, but only the God of love can inspire a Saint Francis of Assisi; it can confidently be asserted that the spirit of Christianity has found expression more in St. Francis than in Meister Eckhart.

There is enough in New Testament theology to exercise the best minds of Europe and Asia. Clement of Alexandria and Origen elaborated their Christology in the light of the knowledge and experience they had. Let Indian Christians get back to the leaders of the Catechetical School of Alexandria and learn to develop their Christology in the light of the special knowledge and experience they may have as Indians. It is not suggested here that Indian Christology should be a replica of the theology of the Catechetical School of Alexandria. Some of the shortcomings which the Catechetical School has in common with the Vedanta should be eliminated in Indian Christology. Origen, Bādarāyaṇa and Sankara are unanimous as to the immutable and static character of the Supreme Reality; and they all think that contemplation

<sup>2</sup>In Sanskrit literature life has been accepted; and joy of life is not altogether absent; in Indian art the same spirit of world-affirmation is evident. This has happened in spite of Hindu religion and Hindu philosophy. In the Upanishads and the Brahma-Sūtras myths and legends abound; and the historical outlook is absent. The Sūtras take the caste divisions for granted; and both Sankara and Rāmānuja agree that low-caste men cannot lay claim to the practice of that spiritual discipline which, the Vedanta thinks, leads to Moksha. Rāmānuja goes so far as to say that Bhakti-Yoga is not meant for low-caste people, for whom he recommends Prapatti. All these integral elements of the Vedanta bring out the essentially Hindu character of the system.

<sup>3</sup>The Gnosticism of Clement and Origen is not incompatible with the theology of the New Testament; this type of Gnosticism is in important aspects different from the Gnosticism of the heretical sects.

is the way to apprehend the Supreme Reality. The dynamic conception of God Who is ever active in history and Who unfolds His nature therein is very prominent in both the Old and the New Testament. Clement identifies this dynamic aspect of the Godhead with the Logos and seems to think that the Absolute is inscrutable and does not come within the range of experience or of history. It is permissible to hold that we know God only as He manifests Himself to us; Indian Christology may stress the fact that gnosis enables us to apprehend God only as He manifests Himself, and may bring out the implications of this view. Self-manifestation is of the essence of the nature of God; gnosis is for this reason an eternal process which is associated with history and is also independent of it.

The Vedantist asserts that the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman, but the Vedantic position has many logical and metaphysical difficulties. What exactly is the relation between the subject (knower of Brahman) and the predicate (Brahman)? Does Brahman know itself when the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman? Are there as many Brahmans as there are knowers of Brahman? What happens to Tripūti-Nyāya? Do the knower, the known and the knowing coalesce, with the first and perhaps also the last disappearing altogether? Is Vedantic Moksha another name for annihilation?<sup>4</sup> Origen's view seems to be that gnosis gives 'likeness' and not identity with the Godhead. This view is more reasonable and accords better with the theology of the New Testament.

Let Indian Christians now tackle the more difficult task that is waiting to be accomplished. Let them Christianize the Vedanta. A Christianized Vedanta would be a gift worthy of a free and independent India.

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<sup>4</sup> Quietism in Europe came very near the Vedantic conception of Moksha; Molinos and Madame Guyon were probably hankering after annihilation without knowing it. There is only one form of immortality that is personal immortality; other types are really euphemistic forms of annihilation. George Matheson was not thinking of annihilation when he wrote: 'I give Thee back the life I owe. . . .

# The Religious Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal

HERBERT JAI SINGH

Sheikh Muhammad Iqbal is the most outstanding poet-philosopher of modern Muslim India. He was born on February 22, 1876, in the city of Sialkot, Punjab. He had his early education in India, first in a *maktab* (Muslim religious school), then in Murray College, in Sialkot, and finally at the Government College in Lahore, where he took his M.A. in philosophy. During his education in India, his main interests were poetry, philosophy and Muslim culture. For some time he taught history and philosophy at the Oriental College, Lahore. In 1905, he left for England to study philosophy at Cambridge and law in London. At Cambridge, he studied under J. E. McTaggart. From England he went to Germany to work for a doctor's degree in philosophy at the University of Munich. His doctoral dissertation was later published under the title of *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*.

To the average Muslim in North India, Iqbal is best known as a poet and, poet indeed he was, of the very first order. But poetry for Iqbal was a means to disseminate some germinal ideas to awaken the slumbering Muslim world. To this end, he employed every possible medium of expression that he possessed. He wrote his poetry in Urdu and in Persian to reach the widest possible audience in the Muslim world. His most important work, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, was written in English.

The dominating motive in the religious writings of Iqbal is to reformulate the thought of Islam in terms of modern Western philosophy. It was his firm conviction that such a reformulation was imperative if Islam was to be meaningful to the new generation of Muslims. He also wanted to eliminate the misunderstanding by the non-Muslim peoples everywhere of the basic teachings of Islam. In this he especially addressed himself to Europe. Iqbal, therefore, can be regarded as the spokesman of the new emerging world of Islam.

Iqbal thought and acted in the context of Indian Islam. His writings evince a sensitive awareness of the decadence of Islam in general and the manifold failings of Indian Islam in particular. Educationally the Muslims of India clung to a theory of education which encouraged the uncritical acceptance of traditional lore, where memorization of facts was preferred to the spirit of inquiry and research. Injured pride deterred the Muslim youth from attending schools instituted by a government which had displaced the Mughal Empire. In the time of Iqbal, they were slowly overcoming this prejudice, thanks to the efforts of Sir Sayyid, who had founded the Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh.

In social ethics, Islam was being challenged by the invasion of a new culture that entered India in the wake of the British raj. The religious situation was even more complex. On the one hand, Indian Islam was 'tainted' by the subtle influence of Hinduism. There were movements directed to cleanse Islam of these 'impurities'. On the other hand, there was the problem of stating Islamic doctrine in such a way that it would answer to the needs of contemporary Muslims. There had been little progress in Islam, since the middle ages, in the discussion of theological and philosophical issues. With few exceptions authoritarianism was the method par excellence as a criterion for religious truth. The function of reason was not the critical evaluation but the defense of accepted doctrine. Muslim orthodoxy held tenaciously to the doctrine of a transcendent and omniscient God, who knew through an eternal decree every event irrespective of its position in the temporal sequence. The future was already determined. Consequently the Muslim world was in the grip of a determinism that destroyed initiative and produced an attitude of fatalistic resignation. It is in this context that the contributions of Iqbal must be discussed and evaluated.

### The Problem of Method

Iqbal grappled with the problem of knowledge in religion. For him, the Quran is the norm and final authority in matters religious. He ignores the problem of the relation of Scriptural authority to the rest of his epistemological views. We are not told how the authority of the Quran is related to intuition and reason, the two most important sources of religious knowledge for Iqbal. Next to the Quran, he finds that intuition is the method par excellence for a direct knowledge of Reality. Reason's apprehension of Reality is distorted because it breaks up the continuum of Reality into fragments by imposing static concepts on something that is dynamic. Only through mystic-intuition can Reality be grasped in its dynamic immediacy. Intellect gives us only a cinematographic view of it. It is a device created by the necessities of life, which for practical purposes can deal with reality only through static concepts. In his emphasis on intuition as the true method of religious knowledge Iqbal acknowledges his affinities with *Sufism* (Muslim mysticism). At the same time he is critical of the negative pantheistic type of Sufism, which Islam inherited from Neo-Platonism.

The method of intuition raises three serious problems: (1) Can non-conceptual or pre-conceptual experience claim the title of knowledge? (2) How can intuitive experience be verified? (3) How can it be communicated except through concepts?

### God : The Divine Self

It is in his doctrine of God, however, that Iqbal has really introduced a revolution in the world of Muslim theology. God, for him, is not an unchanging Absolute, but a dynamic Reality. The most frequent analogy for God, in the writings of Iqbal, is the analogy of the Self. Time is real for God. He knows the past as the past can be known in all its details, but he knows the future as potential and thus vaguely in terms of possibilities. There is freedom and adventure even for God. The

Divine Self, according to Iqbal, is a 'rationally directed life'. It has imminent 'ends' and 'purposes' which 'act from within, unlike the concept of cause which is external to the effect and acts from without'. In other words, Reality is teleological. Teleology, however, does not imply a fixed futurity. The future presents an 'uncertainty' even for God's purposes. Is there any broad and general purpose inherent in the nature of the Divine Self which he is constantly pursuing in the midst of the host of immediate purposes that must be actualized for the preservation of the universe? Iqbal hints at this purpose of the Divine Self as the pursuit of a new cosmic synthesis at each moment. He is immanent in the world in the sense that the world is organically related to him. God and the world imply each other. His omnipotence is limited by the choices of the society of organisms that constitute his being. The tremendous significance of this conception of God in the Muslim theology can be appreciated when we realize the grip of fatalism which an exaggerated emphasis on the omniscience of God has created in Islam. In a way Iqbal's whole theological effort may be summarized as a determined and effective attack on the doctrine of fate. Iqbal has tried to show that the future lies as an open possibility even for God. All this is due to the tremendous shift in the philosophical perspective that Iqbal attempted to introduce in Muslim theology and the shift is from a philosophy of substance to one of process.

### The Human Self

The life of the self in time is not to be conceived in atomistic terms for such a conception of the self does not account for the indisputable fact of memory.

Iqbal asserts emphatically over and over again the individual reality of the human selves in the all-encompassing reality of the Divine Self. He rejects all pantheistic philosophies wherein the distinct individuality of man is lost in the all-embracing reality of God.

Man is a real creator. His freedom is real because the future remains open even for God; also because God is not the only creator as most Muslim theology has traditionally maintained, but man is a fellow creator with him. Iqbal, therefore, emphasizes the need for creative action and he exhorts his fellow Muslims to strengthen the Self, through obedience to the Law of Islam, through self-control, and through the effort to bring into being the vicegerency of God on earth. The hope for the coming of a superior race of men Iqbal finds in the doctrine of evolution. He even builds a doctrine of immortality on the support of the evolutionary view of life. Immortality, however, is conditional. Only those selves survive the shock of death who have strengthened themselves through creative activity in this life. The life after death is also one of activity. The discussion of immortality in Iqbal is confusing because it seems to imply a world beyond and apart from history and time. It seems to be a vestigial remnant from an older metaphysics which divided reality into the world of time and the world of eternity.

### Change and Social Order

In ethics Iqbal faces the problem of reconciling a metaphysics of change with an ethics of permanent norms especially such as are speci-

fically enjoined in the Holy Quran. Here he emphasizes what he calls 'the principle of movement in Islam' by which he means that modern Muslims have the right to re-interpret the law of Islam in terms of the needs of their present situation by invoking the principle of *ijtihad*. Modern Muslims are not bound by the verdict of the Tradition, although this is a valuable source of precedents in theological and legal matters. The principle of *ijma* (general agreement of opinion) can be best expressed in our times through a Legislative Assembly in which the voice of both the clergy as well as the trained laity can be heard in the reformulation of the Muslim law. Wherever necessary, analogical reason (*qiyas*) should be employed to determine the verdict of law on particular cases. The Quran is final in matters of theology as well as law. Iqbal attempted to reconcile change and permanence with regard to the Quranic norms by saying that the Quran should be reinterpreted in terms of the need of the age. To understand Iqbal's views on change and social order, we must recognize him as a man who stood on the boundary line of an old and a new world. We find him progressive in adumbrating general principles of change but conservative when it comes to specific instances such as change in the status of women in Islam. However, he advocates change in some concrete cases too. He attacked the caste system in Islam and was willing to admit the need for women to obtain divorce rather than be driven into apostasy to secure freedom from their husbands.

### Influences on the Thought of Iqbal

The three men who were most influential in shaping Iqbal's philosophy and religious outlook were Bergson, Nietzsche and Jalalu'l-Din Rumi. Bergson influenced his view of Reality as dynamic. His definition of time in terms of duration and his preference of intuition to intellect are also to be attributed to Bergson. Nietzsche may have influenced his doctrine of the Ideal Man. However, there are significant differences between Iqbal and Nietzsche. Iqbal denounces Nietzsche's atheism and aristocratic bias. He also rejects Nietzsche's theory of eternal recurrence. Iqbal is greatly influenced by Rumi in his poetic style. Other resemblances between Iqbal and Rumi are to be noticed in their emphasis on intuition, the concept of the Perfect Man, and their use of evolution as an argument for immortality.

# The Teaching of Church History in India\*

JOHN FOSTER

IT WOULD be presumptuous for one who has taught Church History in India for half a year to offer advice upon the subject. However I have taught Church History for 28 years—11 in China, 10 in England, and 7 in Scotland. So I propose to base my remarks less upon this short lecture tour than upon experience in other places, trying, with suitable modifications, to apply it here. I want to plead for Church History

1. a worthier place in the syllabus,
2. a more Indian point of view,
3. better distribution of interest.

## Place in the Syllabus

It is possible for a student to take a Serampore B.D. with nothing more than one year's outline course—twenty centuries in thirty weeks! Our Scottish minimum is two years. I should hesitate to advocate any addition to total lecture time. Your students seem to be even more sadly over-lectured than ours. But I would claim for Church History its fair share. If a student cannot understand the New Testament without the Old Testament to prepare the way, neither does he enter into the full Christian heritage if he regards the Apostolic Age as witnessing the end of the mighty acts of God, instead of their new beginning. We need to take as statement of historic fact our Lord's promise about 'greater works than these' and later guidance 'into all the truth'. Fulfilment of these promises, continuing through sixty generations, and spreading over every continent of the globe—this is the stuff of Church History. All that the Old Testament foretells, and that the New Testament fulfils, concerning the People of God, Church History needs to crown with knowledge of Christianity as an on-going cause of ever-growing significance. Of the fourth discipline, Theology, I have not yet spoken. The interdependence of Church History and Theology is such that Church History is often presented as the handmaid of Theology. I object to that for two reasons: first, because interplay between these subjects ought to have led to the historicizing of Theology rather than to the theologizing of Church History. The historicizing of Theology might for example have led to more study of Patristics, in time now spent in introduction to the latest

\* A lecture given to a joint meeting of the staffs of Serampore and Bishop's Colleges.

jargon—‘de-mythologizing’ and the like—of European theologians. And second, because over-theologizing of Church History has given students the impression that it is chiefly concerned with heresies and councils, and with disgruntled clerics muttering mutual anathemas beneath their beards. The chief concern of Church History ought never to have been anything less than the chief concern of the Church, its commission, ‘Go ye into all the world’. In this connection it will be seen that I have little sympathy with the separation of Church History and the History of Missions. To do that is to leave Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark.

One reason for Church History’s comparative neglect may be its unpopularity. I remember at a conference of theological teachers being asked by a stranger what my own subject was. And when I said ‘Church History’, he gave me a look of real sympathy and said, ‘How awful!’ Later during one of the sessions I had to read a paper. I began by saying, ‘My subject is Church History. Would you not agree that it is the Cinderella of the theological curriculum?’ It was meant to be a rhetorical question, but a voice replied, ‘No, it’s the ugly sister’. One trouble with Church History, I confess, is that there is so much of it. One must select. And I am persuaded that traditional curricula have selected the wrong things. If you make the history of the Church centre upon the mission of the Church, surely you will silence the complaint that it is a subject which seems irrelevant.

### The Relevance of Church History

I was a very young and ill-equipped teacher of Church History in China when my college was visited by Canon B. H. Streeter of Oxford. He pointed me to a book as a model of Church History teaching in the East, *The Ancient Church and Modern India*, by Godfrey Phillips. That small book meant for me a new beginning, and I cannot understand why it has been allowed to go out of print.

For any one with missionary experience, early Church History ought to come to life at every turn. You read the second century Apologists, and think of preaching to idolaters and polytheists now. You go on to Justin’s *Dialogue with Trypho*, and behind the Jew you can discern the Muslim. You find two attitudes to pre-Christian thought, Tertullian with his disdain—‘What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?’—and Clement of Alexandria—‘Perhaps we may say that God gave philosophy to the Greeks till the Lord should call the Greeks; for as the law was to the Hebrews, so philosophy was a schoolmaster to bring the Greek mind to Christ’. I heard the clash at Tambaran in 1938 between the Kraemer attitude and the Chenchiah group, and during this visit sixteen years later I find the dust has not all settled on that conflict.

In my remarks above I did not mean to exclude heresy from Church History; sometimes the rise of heresy is closely connected with the progress of the Church’s mission. Gnosticism is a young Church’s mistaken attempt at indigenous expression. To study that is to go on to think of theosophical aberrations in India now. Montanism may remind you of neighbouring sects of sheep-stealers, who, nowadays too, are chorybantic inspirationists, and given to adventist calculations. Julian the Apostate’s tirades against ‘the despisers of our national rites’, and his attempt to reinstate paganism, suitably reformed after Christian models, but without

acknowledgement of the debt, must seem up-to-date in lands where ancient religions have experienced both revival and reform by their association with modern nationalism. So one might go on. The early centuries come to life again and the early Church provides both examples and warnings which should not be lost to us.

### Point of View

When I was given the syllabus of the college in India where I was to do regular Church History teaching\*, one thing shocked me. I require my students in Glasgow to know more concerning the eastward spread of Christianity than you require in India. I was to teach an outline course (presumably western, since 'Indian Church History' was down as a separate subject, not being taken this year), and the 'Early Centuries up to 451'. Here, incidentally, is an illustration of the theologizing of Church History, and one of peculiarly western emphasis. The Council of Chalcedon, 451, does (I believe) represent a landmark in the progress of systematic theology, but it is achieved by the triumph of a letter from an absentee Pope, in a Greek Council discussing Greek terms, while the Pope in question wrote in Latin and knew no Greek at all. The whole affair is so western that it is small wonder that when one passes from Latin areas of the Church, through Greek, and on to Coptic to the south and Syriac to the east, Chalcedon should not be accepted at all. That is by the way. I do accept Chalcedon, of course, but in Scotland I make the terminus of the early centuries, not 451, but 461, the year of the death of Patrick—not a theologian but a missionary; not in Asia Minor but among the Scots. In India, why not go on from Chalcedon, 451, as far as Cosmas Indicopleustes, 522? This may sound finicky, but there is something in it. A syllabus should be arranged and periods divided according to the point of view which one wishes to encourage. I believe that wherever Church History is taught, the right point of view is that which sees a Universal Church

1. always meant in the purposes of God to come to my land and me;
2. from the earliest times actually beginning to do so; and
3. in spite of failure within and opposition from without, having in every age surprising achievements in this regard.

Let me illustrate from China. In the year 1690 Jesuit missionaries had good hopes of converting the Emperor K'ang Hsi. One day he asked them, 'If all this be true, how is that we do not hear about it for 1600 years? Why are only the barbarians mentioned and the Chinese left out?' When I was in China in the 1920's, it was not a well-disposed Emperor, on the verge of conversion, asking awkward questions. It was a virulent nationalist propaganda, much of it already communist-inspired, charging Christian education with denationalizing Chinese youth, charging Christianity itself with being an agent of 'Anglo-American cultural aggression'. What was the answer? Chinese Christians had no answer. They themselves believed, though they did not complain, that

\* Half an academic year was spent in one college, and four others were more briefly visited.

the Christian Church was a foreign institution. Perhaps there lay the measure of our failure, that they should *not* have complained. We had failed to give a right point of view, because many of us had never achieved a right point of view ourselves.

In the Theological College at that time, our Church History textbooks were direct translations from the West. Then a new one was issued, greatly improved. Nine-tenths of it was still western in content, but it had a supplement, 'The History of Christianity in China'. But do you see the point of view encouraged? China was an added extra, an afterthought, apart from the main-line development of the purposes of God.

### Syllabus for the East?

I myself began a new syllabus. We followed early Church History up to the fifth century Christological controversies, the eastern divisions, the Syriac-speaking Church of the East—and its arrival at the capital of China in the year 635. Then we went back to the West for the Middle Ages, the rise of Islam, the Crusades, Francis of Assisi (1209), and in 1294 Franciscan Friars reached Khanbaliq, which is Peking. Then to the West again for the Reformation, contemporary with discovery of new routes to the East, the Counter-Reformation, the Company of Jesus—and in 1552 St. Francis Xavier dies off the coast of China. Back once more for the movements of new religious zeal within western Protestantism—Puritanism, Pietism, Moravianism, Methodism, Evangelicalism; hence comes the Missionary Awakening, the modern missionary movement; and in 1807 with Robert Morrison it comes to China. *Everything comes to China.* The division into periods which I made for China, would do, with small adjustments, for the whole of East Asia. Would not that be an improvement upon the conventional western division into periods, the inevitable sequence of western material, and then, as an added extra, 'Christianity in India'?

It is hardly necessary to add that, in doing this, making an 'India-wards' Church History, one must beware of reacting to an opposite extreme. Church History must remain the history of the universal Church; no narrow nationalism must invade and falsify. Nor must our teaching ever be sentimentally unreal for the sake of national interests. The West *is* the scene of Christianity's most striking early triumph; and repeatedly in succeeding centuries sees movements of renewal which are to inaugurate new eastward out-reachings. It is neither a case of omitting history because it is western, nor of falsifying its proportions for the sake of the East. It *is* a question of what the main line of interest should be. If the same scene is viewed from the East instead of from the West, its contents will remain unchanged, but foreground and background will change places.

### Distribution of Interest

I am a strong believer in an outline course, done either by lectures or by required reading. There is much to be said for lectures, if there is time, and if there is some one who can do them with insight and with enthusiasm. If I am studying a map, give me the company of one who knows and loves the countryside. But I would never recommend an outline course standing alone, all the Church History a man ever does.

That is like giving him a map and telling him that he has had his excursion. It is experience in detailed exploration which makes a map of other areas significant.

A second criticism which I must offer about an outline course is that it is not examinable. I quote the Serampore syllabus: 'General outline from the beginning to the present time, one paper'. That sounds like asking the impossible. I have sufficient Indian experience to know the difficulties of an unexamined course. When I told one class, 'We have completed the required syllabus, so we will go on to do some other work just for fun', fifty per cent of the class resolved that I should have the fun to myself. Still I believe in always teaching more than I examine, and I think there is something of principle in having it so, even if the inferior students do slack off.

A third criticism is that the field of Church History is so great that the syllabus ought not to have room for courses which (as with Serampore at present) overlap.

### Outline and Detail

If everybody studied Church History for two years, the division which most naturally suggests itself is Pre-Reformation and Post-Reformation. That is how my own syllabus divides. We have three terms, and, in the first year, spend two on the first five centuries, followed by one term (outline, and unexamined) on the next thousand years. The second year contains two periods for detailed study, one covering the parts of the Reformation which most nearly concern our own denominational inheritance, and the second being nineteenth century and mainly concerned with the modern missionary movement. The rest of post-Reformation Church History is again outline, required, but unexamined, and done, according to time sequence, around these two periods of detailed study. Our third year provides for special students going further, with advanced study of three subjects, including this time first-hand acquaintance with relevant documents. At present the subjects are: (1) the second and third century Apologists, (2) a century of modern Scottish Church History, (3) the Missionary Awakening, with developments in India, or China, or Africa, up to 1914. It will be noticed that once the required minimum is covered, there is leisure for overlapping. This third year course, in any case, is for the few.

### Permanent and Transitory

I am far from meaning that your pattern in India should correspond, even roughly, with mine in Scotland. I would, however, stress the importance of two periods, the early centuries, and the nineteenth century. I was inclined to add a third, the period of denominational origins. This was because of my feeling that union schemes can hardly be engineered by those who do not understand divisions, nor contributions to a united Church be made by those who are not acquainted with denominational traditions. However, one of my Indian colleagues expressed himself forcibly about this: 'Theological education in India', he said, 'has been so busy with denomination that it has failed to develop a supra-denominational conception of the Church.' I do not know enough either to

confirm or to contradict that judgment. Of course it was my intention to include other people's denominational origins, as well as one's own, not just one peculiar people. With regard to denominationalism, indeed with regard to all divisions in the Holy Catholic Church, it is my firm conviction that we all need to examine the inheritance, and with ruthless honesty separate it into two parts, the transitory and the permanent. We shall usually find that the transitory is made up of negations—opposition to this or that abuse in the sixteenth or seventeenth century Church, of only antiquarian interest today; denial of this or that superstitious regard, irrelevant in an age when men believe too little, not too much; contradiction of some one else's mis-statement, a some one of whom Indians have never heard and never will. Transitory! And that which is of abiding worth, the denominational contributions which we are meant to carry with us, and to continue to enjoy in the unity of a re-united Church—these are the positive affirmations, concerning experience, conduct, rite, or doctrine, for a time forgotten, obscured, or overlaid, but belonging to all time, all places and so, through us, to India. Church History can make us wiser as to such judgments, and, if it does, it is worth including 'denominational origins'.

If I had to choose two periods, instead of three, I should have no hesitation in saying: (1) the early centuries, which contain the fixing of so much—canon, creed, church order, theological terms, even the directions of Christian geography; and (2) the nineteenth century, which Professor Latourette has called 'the Great Century', to which he has given three out of his seven volumes on *The Expansion of Christianity*, and about which, having passed the age of three score years and ten, he has settled down to write for the next decade. It is a cheering thought to those preparing for life-service in the Church's ministry, that the last completed century of the Church's history is the greatest, and, what is more, it happens to be true.

[This is the first of a series of articles on the teaching of subjects in Theological Colleges which we plan to publish in the Journal. Comments on this and subsequent articles, in either correspondence or article form, will be welcomed.—Eds.]

# Hinduism Re-thinking Itself\*

BASIL MANUEL

## I

The main purpose of these introductory notes on *Hinduism Re-thinking Itself* is to show that the question of the theological understanding of the problems of mankind today is also engaging the serious attention of the Hindu thinkers in our country. In India today there is a search for a new way of life, for a deeper understanding of the nature and destiny of man, and for a new integration of life in society. This search after, and research into, the meaning and purpose of life in society has become all the more important because New India does not in any way want to be left out of its spiritual contribution towards the coming into being of World Community. It is in the light of this that we should understand and study the great religious and cultural renaissance of our country as it is interpreted by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan and the leaders of the Ramakrishna Mission, not to mention the others. Further the life and teaching of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Tagore have had and are having a profound effect on the lives of millions in this country. But in spite of the efforts of all these great men it is also necessary to bear in mind that there are others in India who believe that the re-organization and re-interpretation of society has to be undertaken independently of religion and entirely as a secular matter. For our purpose, however, these introductory notes will be mainly concerned with the former, with passing reference to the latter.

In his book *Religion and Society* Dr. Radhakrishnan recognizes that great spiritual issues are at stake today. Humanity is struggling to emerge out of an order which is played out; he argues, therefore, that the essential need of the day is not a programme for a party, but a way of life for the people, not a new set of adjustments but a new conception of the purpose of man. He states further that we are in the grip of demoniac forces which degrade the god-man into the herd animal. He sums up the whole situation in a most poignant sentence, 'What is missing in our age is the soul; there is nothing wrong with the body. We suffer from sickness of spirit.' The only remedy for this malady is the reclamation of man for the life of spirit. In order to do this we must discover our roots in the eternal and regain faith in the transcendent truth which will order life, discipline discordant elements, and bring unity and purpose into life.

The remaking of man must precede any profound change in man's life which will enable him to live a meaningful life. To Dr. Radhakrishnan the only justification for any organized religion is that it exists to open the way to the spiritual existence of man. Therefore, he argues, religion should not be confused with fixed intellectual conceptions,

\*I am indebted to Dr. P. D. Devanandan's book *The Concept of Māyā* throughout this article.

which are mind-made. Any religion which claims finality and absolute-ness only desires to impose its own opinions on the rest of the world. This being his conviction he defines the essence of religion as consisting in man's hold on what is eternal and immanent in being. Hinduism is not bound up with a creed or a book, a prophet or a founder, precisely because it is a persistent search for truth on the basis of a continuously renewed experience. Hinduism according to him is human thought about God in continuous evolution. Therefore, he says, we must rediscover the soul of India. Such a discovery can only be made if it is sufficiently realized that 'this evolutionary ascent from the world of inanimate matter (*anna*) through life (*prâna*), mind (*manas*) and intelligence (*vijñâna*) to self-existent awareness and delight (*ânanda*) is happening, not automatically or capriciously, but under the stress of the Divine'. To him life is one, and in it there is no distinction between the sacred and the secular because the controlling power of spiritual faith operates in every department of life.

## II

Hinduism in re-thinking itself is doing much more than merely re-stating and re-interpreting the original propositions of Upanishadic orthodoxy. Dr. P. D. Devanandan in his book, *The Concept of Mâyâ*, says that Dr. Radhakrishnan uses the time-honoured religious terms associated so long with Hindu orthodoxy and packs them full of religious values for which it will be difficult to find sanction in Hinduism itself, and concludes: 'The Neo-Hinduism of Radhakrishnan is Hinduism re-born, a new creation, not merely revived and reconstructed'. We can readily understand this in the context of the great desire of India to march along with the totality of world-life. It is recognized that the most urgent need in India today is for a thorough re-construction of Indian society in order that India may play its full part in the affairs of the world. Therefore, in New India the ideal of service of man to man (in order to build up one solidarity and self-respect of the nation) has given a new purposiveness with a co-operative search for a social ideal. Influenced by the life, teaching and example of Mahatma Gandhi it is recognized that such a task calls for the acceptance of the ultimate sovereignty of spiritual truth and all its moral obligations, the chief of which is reverence for life.

The ideological reconstruction of Hindu religious theory today is more revolutionary and radical but yet spiritual in temper because, in the first place, the new social ideals now dominating the Hindu view of life found their way into Indian society through men who were either critical or sceptical of the validity of the faith of their fathers; secondly, though they lacked the real knowledge of orthodox Hindu religious ideals, they were enabled to appreciate the Hindu way of life and take interest in Hindu religious theory because of their great admiration for Mahatma Gandhi; thirdly, in the predominance of lay leadership of the reform movement within Hinduism there is an impatient anxiety about the application of religious truth to the current conditions of everyday life; fourthly, the impatience about religious theory and the insistence upon a practical programme is due to 'a fresh sense of history' and 'a new consciousness of polities'; fifthly, it is recognized that the urgent need in India today is for a dynamic activism which will give drive to social-reconstruction. Therefore, the present generation inspired by the leader-

ship of Swami Vivekananda insists on working out the practical implications of Hinduism without waiting for a social theory, carefully enunciated according to Hindu religious theory, which will justify the great social changes of today. K. M. Panikkar in his *Hinduism and the Modern World* speaks for such a generation when he asks, 'How can the Hindus be made vigorous, active and healthy members, instead of being the invalids, as they are now, of the human family?... It is obvious that, constituted as the Hindus are, they are in no position to participate effectively in the shaping of human destiny.'

What has been said so far has indicated that in India much religious thought is being given to the whole question of theological principles underlying the problems of Society. Can this reformed and vivified Hinduism provide the needed intellectual justification and spiritual drive for the new life in India? There is a possibility that in certain quarters the need for a religious theory of Society may be denied. Since religions have been a divisive force in our history much stress has been laid on the underlying cultural unity in a secular India. Further, there is also evidence of an unbounded faith that the great advance which science is making will result in the inevitable progress in the well-being of Society in India. It is easier to understand this when the sole aim seems to be material advancement through rapid industrialization. Another possibility is that though the educated Hindu may not actually deny religious values he will be indifferent to any credal religion. He seems to say: let him that believes, believe, and believe what he likes; only let us stand together in our fight for social righteousness. A passion for social righteousness and social re-construction has an enormous appeal to the vast majority of people in this country. Therefore the best men of the country, who in former generations would have sought the quiet and peace of the mountain side or the forest, are now devoting themselves to the service of the poor. There is yet another possibility. This is to seek a 'dynamic rejuvenation' of Hinduism and thereby provide an adequate religious theory of Society. To Dr. Radhakrishnan it is clear that the only way to save the people of India from succumbing to materialism in the name of secularism is to convert the Upanishadic orthodoxy from being mere 'containers' of religious philosophy into 'generators' of spiritual power.

### III

To a Christian the ideological reconstruction of Hindu religious theories whether in the name of orthodoxy or neo-orthodoxy, in the name of the absolute idealism of the Vedanta or the lofty mysticism of the Vaishnava cult, in the name of dynamic activism or in the name of social righteousness, raises a very important question regarding his own Christian faith as an Indian in a secular India, taking his full share in the material advancement of Indian society. What is he to make of the essentials of Hinduism such as the nature of the Brahman, the principle of Karma-Saṁsāra, the significance of the Jivātman, the Māyā-World of action and reaction, and the Hindu social fabric of caste-dharma. These time-honoured religious terms, long associated with Hindu orthodoxy, have acquired new and vigorous spiritual content and as such are full of religious values for which it would be difficult to find sanction in Orthodox Hinduism.

The World, said Sankara, is Māyā because from the standpoint of Śruti (revelation) it is tucchā (fictitious); from the standpoint of Yukti (discursive reasoning) it is anirvacanīya (not to be explained in words, inexplicable, and from the standpoint of laukika bodha (world-mindedness, practical reasoning) it is, to be sure, Vāstavī (real). (Quoted by Dr. P. D. Devanandan.) This being the world-view in Hinduism it is difficult to see how any reconciliation can be made between such a view of God, world and man and the Christian conception of God, world and man. The differences become clearer when we consider the problem of the connection between the idea of God and the experience of God. The question to be asked in the Re-thinking of Hinduism is this: Who is this God who is experienced? Unless this question is asked, and repeatedly asked, how is it possible to have great and jubilant assertions of the reality of God and the meaning of religious life of man in society?

Dr. Radhakrishnan insists that religion is a matter of personal realization. Does this mean that, for a Hindu, there can really be (as Dr. Albert Schweitzer points out) no question of activity in co-operation with the Spirit of the Universe; but only of devoting oneself to (a personal) activity through which he may experience spiritual union with the Spirit? Dr. Radhakrishnan in answer says that Hinduism insists on working steadily upwards and improving our knowledge of God. Revelation, then, for the Hindu is intuitive insights of men into the nature of Reality. The Christian conviction that Revelation is the self-disclosing activity of God to man diverges completely from the Hindu conception of revelation. The Christian conviction and experience is that revelation is a movement from God's side and not a 'discovery' of God by man's intuitive insights. (Though theistic points of view may be provisionally entertained in certain aspects of Hindu thought, the all-pervading conception of the Divine is fundamentally and uncompromisingly monistic.)

Today in India there are many who believe that Sankara's reduction of the world to a mere phantasmagoria can be rejected as there is no need to be 'world-denying' in that extreme degree. To such people this can be done without surrendering the typical character of Indian religion. Thus, Ramanuja can maintain the reality of the world and even adduce a certain measure of Upanishadic backing for this. To him the world as well as the individual souls in it are real. Neither of them is essentially the same as Brahman and apart from Brahman they are nothing. They can exist and be what they are because Brahman is their soul and inwardly controlling power. To him Sankara is wrong when he describes the Brahman of the Upanishads as 'pure intelligence'. Intelligence is but one of the attributes of Brahman because the Upanishadic First Principle is not devoid of attributes. 'The Lord pervades and governs both material and immaterial things in this organic and inorganic world as their antaryāmin, inward controller.' (Dr. Devanandan.) Thus, to Ramanuja God is a person and creation takes place as a result of volition on the part of the Lord. He contends that the cognition of the ultimate reality of God is a 'gift' (prasādam). In this he brings out his doctrine of grace but he is emphatic that there is no merging of the soul into the absolute perfection of the Brahman. While participating in all the splendour of the Brahman, it retains its individuality. Further, he also conceives the world as the 'body' of Brahman. He defines 'body' as 'any substance which a conscious being completely controls and supports

for its own purpose and whose only nature consists in being subservient to the conscious being'. The whole world with its souls and matter is completely controlled and supported by Brahman. This is because to him the essence of 'body' consists in being subservient to the soul embodied in it. Therefore, the physical and psychical things in the world can only exist as the 'modes' of Brahman. Thus Ramanuja can maintain the reality of the world and can think in terms of a world which is created, sustained and dissolved again by God. But this world (of Ramanuja) 'remains ever what it is, a *lilā*, a sport of the Deity, a concatenation without goal and end (true, not without objective existence), but eternally worthless, never arriving at a fulness of worth, never glorified and made an abode of the Kingdom and the final dominion of God Himself'. (Rudolf Otto in *India's Religion of Grace and Christianity, Compared and Contrasted*. Quoted by A. G. Hogg.)

#### IV

To conclude, it is submitted that the Hindu understanding of the principles underlying the theological understanding of society seems to bring out pointedly that while the Christian is thinking, praying and speaking in terms of 'Faith', the Hindu is thinking, praying and speaking in terms of 'Knowledge'. It is therefore fundamentally a question of conflict, not merely of terms used, but of the whole conception of Faith in God and Knowledge of God. The one thinks in terms of the revelational activity of God in His World and the other speaks of human thought *continuing* to discover and know God. The *nāmā* (name) and *rūpā* (form) of God in Hinduism is contrary to the 'name' and 'form' of God as revealed by Jesus Christ. In the words of Prof. Otto the Hindu attitude is: 'You want "morals," "ethics," "culture," and so on. But we "are above it," for we want more and quite different things. We want "salvation" and nothing but salvation. We want to serve God and Him alone, not any cosmic purpose beside and with Him whatsoever.' 'Salvation' means turning away from the concrete and temporal to contemplation of the abstract and timeless. Therefore, philosophical Hinduism understands and teaches the language of 'Release', as opposed to the fundamental Christian doctrine of 'Redemption'. The strong feeling is that anything worth calling 'salvation' must promise escape from this endless repetition of embodied existence and point to attainment of union with the peaceful 'Absolute'. Thus, the longing is for *serenity* rather than *sanctity*.

It is in this background that we must understand the entire religious outlook of India in its traditional, institutional and reactionary aspects. There is a revolutionary urge which seeks a dynamic outlet in the passion for social service and the accent is more and more laid on the national-cultural-religious heritage. Nay more, 'we must now reorganize our religious thought and practice, if Hinduism is to recover its conquering force and power to advance, penetrate and fertilize the world,' says Dr. Radhakrishnan. It is amazing that this language of militant advance should be used now after all these centuries when the 'conquering force' has been employed in adjusting and assimilating alien ideas and ideologies within the amorphous and all-comprehending, all-inclusive system of life and thought termed 'Hinduism'.

# Book Reviews

## The Christian Students' Library

*The Christian Doctrine of Salvation:* by Sigfrid Estborn, B.A., D.D., xi + 238 pp. Rs.3-12.

*The Revelation of St. John the Divine:* by Anthony Hanson, D.D., iv + 82 pp. Re.1-2.

*The History of the Reformation:* by H. C. Lefever, B.D., Ph.D., viii + 231 pp. Rs.3-12.

(Published for the Senate of Serampore College by the Christian Literature Society, Madras.)

The first three volumes of the Christian Students' Library have now seen the light of day, and we can congratulate Dr. Marcus Ward, the General Editor, on the first fruits of his labours. Those of us who are concerned with teaching in the Theological Colleges and Schools have been eagerly looking forward to these first volumes and we are not disappointed; we have wanted for a long time books like these to put into the hands of our theological students, books that have been written with the Indian background and Indian readers in mind.

Of the three volumes now published, probably the most valuable is the first, 'The Christian Doctrine of Salvation' by Dr. Estborn, of Gurukul. As we might expect from the writer of 'The Religion of Tagore in the Light of the Gospel', there is no doubt whatever that this book has been written in India for those concerned in particular to present the Gospel of Salvation to Hindus, and much of its value lies in its attempt to draw out the differences and similarities of the Hindu and Christian doctrines of sin and salvation. Not everyone will agree with everything that Dr. Estborn has written, but his book is definitely one that will repay careful and concentrated study, and certainly deserves a fuller review than it has received here.

Of the other two volumes, Dr. Hanson's commentary on 'The Revelation of St. John the Divine' is a condensed and adapted reprint of his commentary in the Torch Bible Commentary series published by the Student Christian Movement Press—in itself a sufficient commendation for a book which will no doubt be widely used. Dr. Lefever's book on 'The History of the Reformation' is a readable and straightforward account of the movement to which most of the so-called Protestant Churches in India owe much of their theology and Church order.

The Wesley Press at Mysore can be congratulated on the appearance of the series, with an attractive cover and a print that is easy to the eyes: it is perhaps a pity that the necessity of keeping down the price has meant that the binding is a little flimsy, and we fear that library copies will soon have to be rebound.

Finally we look forward to the next stage in the programme behind these books, the translation of them into the different languages of India, for it is in this sphere that their real value will, we hope, lie.

P. M.

### Authority : its Use and Abuse

*Black Popes—Authority: its Use and Abuse*: by Archbishop Roberts, S.J.  
Longmans Green & Co., London, 1954, x + 139 pp. 8s. 6d.  
(Available from Orient Longmans, Ltd., Calcutta.)

The book is an interesting study of the doctrine of authority and its application to the different walks of life. With a rare degree of candour the author illustrates from the history of the papacy Lord Acton's famous dictum that all power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. The high-handedness of Pope Clement XIV in suppressing the Jesuit order in 1773 and the miscarriage of justice in the Pope's treatment of Father Ricci of China are discussed at length in one of the chapters in the book, which the author concludes as follow: 'The triumph of the Devil is never so complete as when his fifth-column of worldliness penetrates the headquarters of the Catholic Church. Reading papal history . . . one could wish that Catholics were less attached to the title "supreme pontiff" inherited from pagan priests and emperors, and more proud of St. Peter's title . . . "servant of the servants of God"' (p. 69). Notwithstanding the abuse of authority witnessed to by history, Christian duty for the author, it seems, is summed up in the word obedience. However, he gives this warning to those in authority: 'No man can climb to the summit of authority using the one leg of power. The other leg—responsibility must go with him every inch of the way' (p. 2). The main thesis of the book is on the one hand that authority must be commended and not asserted, and on the other that the obedience given must be intelligent and not slavish.

The book seems to have an apologetic purpose behind it, namely to clear the Roman Church of the charge of totalitarianism and to present the authority exercised by the Church and its institutions in as sympathetic a light as possible. But the author's arguments are not likely to carry conviction with those who do not accept the premises from which he draws his conclusions. Our author has no doubt that St. Peter 'the first pope' was 'Christ's vicar' (p. 17), that it is 'God's ordinance that His Church is a monarchical government of Pope and Bishop' (p. 81), that 'Christ instituted the papacy to *commend* authority' (p. 54), that 'for the Protestant, obedience is to his own chosen warrant of private judgment' (p. 33), that Christ's Church is 'His broadcasting corporation guaranteed to bring His Voice so surely across time and space that "he that heareth you (the apostles and their successors) heareth Me"' (p. 77). The only comment we wish to make is that there is little use in arguing with a 'take it or leave it' attitude of mind! Members of the non-Roman Churches will find the author's solution of the problem of Church union as depressing as it is over-simplified. He says 'If Rome has not usurped it (God's authority), then there is no road to unity but by submitting to Rome' (p. 73).

According to the author, obedience is the price of unity, the price of freedom in the Church and of much else. He finds sanction for his view

in 'Christ, the Man of Obedience'. But the Gospels make it clear that this 'Man of Obedience' was also the greatest revolutionary that walked this earth of ours. It seems to us that the pattern of obedience to be traced in the Christ of the Gospels is very different from that depicted by the author of 'Black Popes'.

The book is of interest to readers as the expression of a distinct point of view with regard to authority in religion.

C. E. A.

## Race Relations

*The Ecumenical Movement and the Racial Problem:* by Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, 70 pp.

*The Catholic Church and the Race Question:* by Rev. Fr. Yves M. J. Congar, O.P., 62 pp.

(Pamphlets published under the theme *The Race Question and Modern Thought* by UNESCO, Paris. Two shillings each.)

*The Chosen People or The Bible, Christianity and Race:* By Dr. Gerald W. Bloomfield. x+91 pp. Six shillings. Longmans Green & Co., London, 1954.

(Available from Orient Longmans Ltd., Calcutta.)

The problems involved in the relations between different races have become one of the leading concerns on the Christian conscience in recent years. These three books discuss this problem from various points of view.

The first, written by the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, speaks of the growth of this concern in ecumenical circles. The first half of the book deals with 'facts' and gives a brief outline of the interracial situation in the U.S.A. and in S. Africa, and of the anti-Semitic activities of the National Socialists in Germany and other European countries, and concludes with references to ecumenical pronouncements on the matter. The second half discusses the 'issues' and speaks of the Church as a supra-racial entity and recalls her to a more faithful following of the implications of her real nature.

The second pamphlet, written by a Roman Catholic, begins with a statement of the principles involved, based on the Bible and theology of the Roman Church and goes on to discuss the present situation in race relations within that Church.

The third, written by a former missionary of the Universities Mission to Central Africa is concerned with the problem as it is experienced in various parts of Africa and discusses it more from a Biblical point of view, with special emphasis on the Biblical concept of the 'Chosen People'.

The degree of unanimity of opinion in this matter is striking. Here Roman Catholics and Protestants agree, at least in principle. All are certain that it is against God's will that any discrimination should be made on the basis of colour. All agree with the conclusion reached by scientists working under the auspices of the UNESCO that there is no ground for considering one race superior to another, and that in fact there are no pure races.

It is recognized, especially by the non-Roman writers, that in the past the witness of the Church in this matter has been weak and uncertain. In the last book there seems to be some special pleading, based on uncertain exegesis of the Bible, for the separate continuation of distinct cultures in the same locality and an attempt to justify some of the present inequalities along with an awareness that the sinfulness of man is a factor to be taken into account in this discussion. It is to be noted that the last chapter of the book emphasizes the need of the grace of God in the solution of these problems.

Christians in India ought to take note of these discussions, not merely as concerned with problems affecting other Christians elsewhere, or Indians living in other countries, but also as applying to us in the survival of caste and colour considerations that enter into our churches and social life.

M. P. J.



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The Rev. John Foster, D.D., Professor of Ecclesiastical History, Glasgow University; Visiting Professor, United Theological College, Bangalore.

The Rev. Basil Manuel, Lecturer and Librarian, Bishop's College, Calcutta.

## Books Received

S.C.M. Press :

F. H. L. PARKER : *Portrait of Calvin.*

LORD PERCY : *From the Concert of Europe to the United Nations.*

Orient Longmans :

DOM BENEDICT STEUART : *The Development of Christian Worship.*

GEDDES MACGREGOR : *From a Christian Ghetto.*

E. L. MASCALL : *Corpus Christi.*

# Book Notices

*Evanston Speaks:* Reports from the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches, August 15–31, 1954. 116 pp. Published for The World Council of Churches by S.C.M. Press, London, 1954. 2s. 6d.

This is an official interpretative volume on the Evanston Assembly of the World Council of Churches, intended for the thoughtful Christian who is concerned about the issues that confront a divided Christendom. It contains, in addition to 'the message of the Assembly' addressed to 'all our fellow Christians', the reports of the six sections of the Assembly which 'are the product of a long process of corporate thinking both before and during the Assembly'. They were 'received by the Assembly and commended to the Churches for study and appropriate action'. This is specially significant because the authority of the Assembly is not legally binding on any member Church, and the really valuable results of the Assembly must be seen in the consequences that it can effect in the life of the member Churches, partly through their own study and discussion of the documents that came out of the Assembly.

To each of the reports is prefixed an introduction and some questions prepared by the officers of the section concerned, to explain the context in which the report is to be understood and to help discussion on it. It is to be hoped that this and other documents of the World Council will receive the attention that they deserve from the member Churches and individual Christians.

M. P. J.

*Behold, I stand at the Door and Knock:* by the Rt. Rev. A. J. Appasamy. 6as. *The River of Life and An Outpouring of the Holy Spirit:* by the same author. 4as. Available from the author, Ratna Vilas, Trichy Road, Coimbatore.

These short booklets make good pentecostalist reading. I use the words, of course, advisedly and in all seriousness. In chapter 4 of *The Household of God*, Bishop Newbigin suggests that the stream of Christian pentecostalist tradition must have its place alongside the Catholic and Protestant traditions in any true ecumenical Christianity. Well, we find in these booklets the record of certain recent and notable movements of the Holy Spirit, through which He has been recognizably present with power among Christians in the Diocese of Coimbatore. Church order in this diocese has not been allowed to damp church ardour. And, what is perhaps more important, real envies and factions have been and are being healed through all this. These are not theological booklets. They are accounts—sometimes rather repetitive accounts—of a number of revivalist campaigns. But they should be read. They are live field material, in which the theologian may profitably research and dig about. He can then go on to discuss theologically and reasonably the nature of the true pentecostalism.

A. C. M. H.

‘The Indian Journal of Theology’ is produced at the Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, which has served the cause of Christian Literature in the East for 137 years. Its 40 languages and modern letterpress plant are at the service of those who wish to have good print produced when it is required.

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